

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:02:52,890

2

00:02:52,890 --> 00:02:55,720

All right.

3

00:02:55,720 --> 00:02:57,730

This is the Holocaust

Oral History

4

00:02:57,730 --> 00:03:01,550

Project on January 20, 1997.

5

00:03:01,550 --> 00:03:05,110

This is part two of our  
interview with Mr. Sam

6

00:03:05,110 --> 00:03:07,600

Genirberg.

7

00:03:07,600 --> 00:03:11,140

The videographer is Maurice  
Harris and the interviewer

8

00:03:11,140 --> 00:03:13,720

is myself, Rick Levine.

9

00:03:13,720 --> 00:03:18,670

We left off last time of  
talking with Mr. Genirberg

10

00:03:18,670 --> 00:03:21,340

about his experience in Trier.

11

00:03:21,340 --> 00:03:22,720

Am I pronouncing that correctly?

12

00:03:22,720 --> 00:03:24,430

Yes

13

00:03:24,430 --> 00:03:27,520  
And how would you spell that?

14  
00:03:27,520 --> 00:03:35,075  
T-R-I-E-R. And it's situated  
on the Mozelle River.

15  
00:03:35,075 --> 00:03:41,330  
And this is in what we  
would now call West Germany.

16  
00:03:41,330 --> 00:03:41,870  
Yes.

17  
00:03:41,870 --> 00:03:43,910  
Yes, it's near  
the French border.

18  
00:03:43,910 --> 00:03:46,910

19  
00:03:46,910 --> 00:03:53,300  
You were describing to us  
at our last conversation

20  
00:03:53,300 --> 00:03:58,910  
your weeks in this  
concentration camp.

21  
00:03:58,910 --> 00:04:07,910  
And you were explaining that  
you faced a daily ritual

22  
00:04:07,910 --> 00:04:10,970  
of a nude inspection.

23  
00:04:10,970 --> 00:04:12,320  
Yes.

24  
00:04:12,320 --> 00:04:14,960  
During which you felt in  
considerable jeopardy.

25

00:04:14,960 --> 00:04:21,589

And on one occasion, a  
Ukrainian about your age

26

00:04:21,589 --> 00:04:24,380

threatened you that  
your identity as a Jew

27

00:04:24,380 --> 00:04:28,940

was no longer safe and you  
had a bit of a pushing match.

28

00:04:28,940 --> 00:04:29,540

Yes.

29

00:04:29,540 --> 00:04:32,180

Can you pick up there and--

30

00:04:32,180 --> 00:04:32,840

Yes.

31

00:04:32,840 --> 00:04:34,910

Sure.

32

00:04:34,910 --> 00:04:41,060

So when this boy told me  
in a threatening manner

33

00:04:41,060 --> 00:04:44,450

that I won't be able  
to hide out anymore,

34

00:04:44,450 --> 00:04:47,360

we know that you're  
a Jew and some ways

35

00:04:47,360 --> 00:04:52,430

are threats, like you said,  
we had the shoving match

36

00:04:52,430 --> 00:04:53,550

and we walked away.

37  
00:04:53,550 --> 00:04:56,780  
But I was frightened.

38  
00:04:56,780 --> 00:04:59,880

39  
00:04:59,880 --> 00:05:04,214  
I was in a grim situation  
because I was locked in.

40  
00:05:04,214 --> 00:05:07,340

41  
00:05:07,340 --> 00:05:08,960  
There was no way  
for me to escape.

42  
00:05:08,960 --> 00:05:13,850  
Escaping was tantamount  
with suicide.

43  
00:05:13,850 --> 00:05:17,600  
As a matter of fact, a  
couple of days before they

44  
00:05:17,600 --> 00:05:21,500  
assembled all the inmates  
on the parade ground

45  
00:05:21,500 --> 00:05:26,570  
and we walked by and in pairs  
to watch two men who were dead,

46  
00:05:26,570 --> 00:05:29,030  
lying on the ground,  
who tried to escape

47  
00:05:29,030 --> 00:05:31,370  
and they were shot dead.

48  
00:05:31,370 --> 00:05:35,600

So I had no options  
and alternatives,

49

00:05:35,600 --> 00:05:42,530  
and I was I was very frightened  
that time being locked in.

50

00:05:42,530 --> 00:05:45,230  
Was the perimeter of  
the camp barbed wire?

51

00:05:45,230 --> 00:05:49,130  
Yes, barbed wire and  
guards all of over.

52

00:05:49,130 --> 00:05:52,250  
And two layers of barbed wire.

53

00:05:52,250 --> 00:05:56,330  
It was highly secured.

54

00:05:56,330 --> 00:06:01,370  
And so by the time  
we went to sleep,

55

00:06:01,370 --> 00:06:04,350  
I didn't sleep very  
well that night.

56

00:06:04,350 --> 00:06:12,380  
The boys of 18 sleep very well,  
but I couldn't fall asleep.

57

00:06:12,380 --> 00:06:16,880  
And also I was not desperate.

58

00:06:16,880 --> 00:06:20,580

59

00:06:20,580 --> 00:06:23,520  
I worried what's going  
to happen in the morning

60

00:06:23,520 --> 00:06:27,270

because if this boy  
carries out the threat

61

00:06:27,270 --> 00:06:29,760

I know that they  
will pick me up.

62

00:06:29,760 --> 00:06:34,950

And will send me to a  
concentration camp or shoot me.

63

00:06:34,950 --> 00:06:40,230

And so as we went to bed  
and I was lying there,

64

00:06:40,230 --> 00:06:46,080

I was 18 years old and I  
remember 12 years of my life,

65

00:06:46,080 --> 00:06:53,010

and all these years what kept  
sort of churning in my mind.

66

00:06:53,010 --> 00:06:56,340

I remembered when I  
was five, six years old

67

00:06:56,340 --> 00:06:59,670

and was playing in  
front of the house

68

00:06:59,670 --> 00:07:02,220

when my parents were  
building a new home.

69

00:07:02,220 --> 00:07:06,210

I remembered when  
I entered school

70

00:07:06,210 --> 00:07:10,480

at the age of seven, entered  
Polish elementary school,

71  
00:07:10,480 --> 00:07:13,050  
and I knew only a  
few words and Polish.

72  
00:07:13,050 --> 00:07:18,990  
And this Polish teacher  
took me by the hand

73  
00:07:18,990 --> 00:07:21,300  
and would take me over to  
a window and point out,

74  
00:07:21,300 --> 00:07:25,380  
this is a window in Polish, and  
this is a ceiling in Polish.

75  
00:07:25,380 --> 00:07:30,120  
She was a decent Polish  
middle-aged woman,

76  
00:07:30,120 --> 00:07:32,100  
a caring woman.

77  
00:07:32,100 --> 00:07:33,570  
And I thought about that.

78  
00:07:33,570 --> 00:07:35,710  
She was with me for four years.

79  
00:07:35,710 --> 00:07:41,310  
She was from the first  
to the fourth grade.

80  
00:07:41,310 --> 00:07:44,980  
And she taught me  
reading and writing,

81  
00:07:44,980 --> 00:07:48,150  
and arithmetic and a  
number of other subjects.

82

00:07:48,150 --> 00:07:50,160

I remember the time  
when I was chosen

83

00:07:50,160 --> 00:07:55,800

to participate in the school  
play and I was playing a clown.

84

00:07:55,800 --> 00:08:00,460

And the same teacher,  
same Polish woman,

85

00:08:00,460 --> 00:08:05,670

would make a suit for me.

86

00:08:05,670 --> 00:08:08,080

And she invited me  
to the house to fit.

87

00:08:08,080 --> 00:08:11,220

And I remembered other things.

88

00:08:11,220 --> 00:08:14,790

And I remembered joining  
the Zionist organization

89

00:08:14,790 --> 00:08:19,140

and the debates  
and the political

90

00:08:19,140 --> 00:08:25,050

lectures that we had about  
politics and nationalism

91

00:08:25,050 --> 00:08:27,390

and about social issues.

92

00:08:27,390 --> 00:08:29,880

I remembered all that.

93

00:08:29,880 --> 00:08:32,890

I thought about my  
mother and father



94  
00:08:32,890 --> 00:08:36,890  
and how hard they  
worked all their lives

95  
00:08:36,890 --> 00:08:43,650  
and they never lived to  
enjoy the joy of raising

96  
00:08:43,650 --> 00:08:46,290  
the children and all that.

97  
00:08:46,290 --> 00:08:48,360  
And by that time I  
must have fallen asleep

98  
00:08:48,360 --> 00:08:50,340  
because the next thing  
next thing I heard

99  
00:08:50,340 --> 00:08:55,890  
was the shrill  
whistle to wake us up.

100  
00:08:55,890 --> 00:09:00,390  
And these guards were  
yelling, [SPEAKING GERMAN]..

101  
00:09:00,390 --> 00:09:04,860  
And we would get up early,  
like 5 o'clock in the morning,

102  
00:09:04,860 --> 00:09:07,560  
and we would go  
to wash and we had

103  
00:09:07,560 --> 00:09:10,410  
to make our bed very thoroughly.

104  
00:09:10,410 --> 00:09:14,140  
They were very precise,  
very strict about that.

105

00:09:14,140 --> 00:09:16,320

Bed had to be very tight.

106

00:09:16,320 --> 00:09:19,710

If you didn't make your bed  
properly, you were beaten up.

107

00:09:19,710 --> 00:09:22,440

108

00:09:22,440 --> 00:09:26,940

I went to wash up and  
then I went for breakfast.

109

00:09:26,940 --> 00:09:31,110

We would all eat in  
the same large hall.

110

00:09:31,110 --> 00:09:32,480

A rather good breakfast.

111

00:09:32,480 --> 00:09:35,110

They gave us enough food.

112

00:09:35,110 --> 00:09:39,000

And all the time I was  
looking for this boy.

113

00:09:39,000 --> 00:09:46,140

And I didn't see him and so  
I asked my other friends,

114

00:09:46,140 --> 00:09:47,670

did you see this boy.

115

00:09:47,670 --> 00:09:50,220

I believe his name was Volodya.

116

00:09:50,220 --> 00:09:53,250

And nobody saw him.

117

00:09:53,250 --> 00:10:01,290

And so we went to work  
that day and I still

118

00:10:01,290 --> 00:10:02,550

didn't see this boy.

119

00:10:02,550 --> 00:10:05,340

120

00:10:05,340 --> 00:10:09,330

My job consisted  
of loading clay out

121

00:10:09,330 --> 00:10:12,210

of a mountain on  
railroad lorries.

122

00:10:12,210 --> 00:10:15,750

And other people would  
push them up the kiln plant

123

00:10:15,750 --> 00:10:17,950

where they made bricks.

124

00:10:17,950 --> 00:10:20,910

It was very hard work and  
you had to work very hard.

125

00:10:20,910 --> 00:10:22,530

You couldn't stop.

126

00:10:22,530 --> 00:10:28,980

And I worked very hard that day  
to get rid of my frustration.

127

00:10:28,980 --> 00:10:31,590

I remember working  
with a Polish boy.

128

00:10:31,590 --> 00:10:36,600

And this Polish boy thought he  
could outwit the German guard.

129  
00:10:36,600 --> 00:10:38,880  
And so whenever the  
German guard looked away,

130  
00:10:38,880 --> 00:10:43,450  
he would stop working  
and lean on the shovel.

131  
00:10:43,450 --> 00:10:46,980  
And I remember one  
time the guard noticed

132  
00:10:46,980 --> 00:10:51,540  
him and he beat them up so badly  
I thought the boy would die.

133  
00:10:51,540 --> 00:10:53,830  
And they would yell out all  
the other people working,

134  
00:10:53,830 --> 00:10:55,860  
why don't you work  
like Andre here?

135  
00:10:55,860 --> 00:10:57,790  
I worked hard and  
I obeyed the rules.

136  
00:10:57,790 --> 00:11:02,220  
I didn't want to  
get into trouble.

137  
00:11:02,220 --> 00:11:10,680  
And afterwards we  
returned to the barracks.

138  
00:11:10,680 --> 00:11:15,340  
So we had dinner and I  
still didn't see this boy

139  
00:11:15,340 --> 00:11:17,250  
and so I didn't know

what happened to him.

140

00:11:17,250 --> 00:11:21,910

But that evening after dinner  
and after the examination,

141

00:11:21,910 --> 00:11:26,230

the usual examination  
in the nude,

142

00:11:26,230 --> 00:11:31,870

I saw my friend who was a kapo,  
if you can call it a friend,

143

00:11:31,870 --> 00:11:34,540

and he invited me and we talked.

144

00:11:34,540 --> 00:11:39,070

And I asked him, do you  
know what happened to--

145

00:11:39,070 --> 00:11:40,000

A boy is missing.

146

00:11:40,000 --> 00:11:45,340

But I didn't tell him  
what was all about.

147

00:11:45,340 --> 00:11:47,500

At first he didn't know.

148

00:11:47,500 --> 00:11:50,200

Then he remembered,  
yes, he said that he

149

00:11:50,200 --> 00:11:51,550

heard there was some commotion.

150

00:11:51,550 --> 00:11:54,820

They took out some  
boy who got very ill.

151

00:11:54,820 --> 00:11:59,050

And I began to talk about it,  
continued the conversation

152

00:11:59,050 --> 00:12:00,170

about it and he got angry.

153

00:12:00,170 --> 00:12:01,878

He said, what are you  
worrying about him?

154

00:12:01,878 --> 00:12:04,240

He's probably dead by now.

155

00:12:04,240 --> 00:12:07,180

I've never saw that boy again.

156

00:12:07,180 --> 00:12:08,290

That was another miracle.

157

00:12:08,290 --> 00:12:11,510

158

00:12:11,510 --> 00:12:15,620

And let me break for  
a moment and ask you.

159

00:12:15,620 --> 00:12:18,470

You were not wearing  
eyeglasses last night.

160

00:12:18,470 --> 00:12:19,380

What do you think?

161

00:12:19,380 --> 00:12:20,930

You're better with or without?

162

00:12:20,930 --> 00:12:23,660

I'm wondering about the  
glare and the camera.

163

00:12:23,660 --> 00:12:25,237

Without is better.

164  
00:12:25,237 --> 00:12:26,070  
Are you comfortable?

165  
00:12:26,070 --> 00:12:26,430  
Yes.

166  
00:12:26,430 --> 00:12:27,070  
Yes?

167  
00:12:27,070 --> 00:12:28,130  
You can see OK?

168  
00:12:28,130 --> 00:12:28,630  
Yes.

169  
00:12:28,630 --> 00:12:32,390

170  
00:12:32,390 --> 00:12:36,020  
You say I asked  
my other friends.

171  
00:12:36,020 --> 00:12:38,870  
You're using the term  
friends very loosely,

172  
00:12:38,870 --> 00:12:41,270  
or did you make  
friends in this place?

173  
00:12:41,270 --> 00:12:43,940  
Did you have a feeling  
of some comradeship

174  
00:12:43,940 --> 00:12:45,740  
with some of the  
other young men?

175  
00:12:45,740 --> 00:12:47,270  
Not really, no.

176  
00:12:47,270 --> 00:12:49,732  
I use the term friends  
as acquaintances

177  
00:12:49,732 --> 00:12:53,960  
or knowing someone,  
a loose expression.

178  
00:12:53,960 --> 00:13:00,290  
You didn't have the  
kind of bond with people

179  
00:13:00,290 --> 00:13:05,360  
whereby you might confide  
your identity, for example.

180  
00:13:05,360 --> 00:13:07,730  
No one throughout this  
period knows you're Jewish.

181  
00:13:07,730 --> 00:13:09,680  
No, no one.

182  
00:13:09,680 --> 00:13:21,470  
No, I didn't want to  
risk to tell somebody,

183  
00:13:21,470 --> 00:13:23,120  
to reveal my identity.

184  
00:13:23,120 --> 00:13:24,290  
It was too much of a risk.

185  
00:13:24,290 --> 00:13:29,390  
And I never knew how these  
people would react to it.

186  
00:13:29,390 --> 00:13:32,425  
This is the case even in those  
situations and the situations

187



00:13:32,425 --> 00:13:36,020  
that occurred where you  
felt some trust in people,

188  
00:13:36,020 --> 00:13:43,610  
you enjoyed some  
friendship with people.

189  
00:13:43,610 --> 00:13:44,240  
Oh yes.

190  
00:13:44,240 --> 00:13:44,780  
Yes.

191  
00:13:44,780 --> 00:13:45,710  
Yes.

192  
00:13:45,710 --> 00:13:51,650  
Yes, I always tried to find  
comrades and colleagues

193  
00:13:51,650 --> 00:13:54,740  
and people with  
whom I could talk.

194  
00:13:54,740 --> 00:14:00,800  
But I never revealed  
my identity to anyone.

195  
00:14:00,800 --> 00:14:03,040  
You speak of making the beds.

196  
00:14:03,040 --> 00:14:07,530  
Did you each have one bunk  
or was it double deck?

197  
00:14:07,530 --> 00:14:09,770  
Triple deck.

198  
00:14:09,770 --> 00:14:11,480  
Triple bunks.

199

00:14:11,480 --> 00:14:15,020

But each one of us  
had to make the bed

200

00:14:15,020 --> 00:14:21,980

and we had the  
linen pillow cover.

201

00:14:21,980 --> 00:14:22,940

The work day.

202

00:14:22,940 --> 00:14:24,950

You have breakfast  
then you're working

203

00:14:24,950 --> 00:14:26,630

and then you mentioned dinner.

204

00:14:26,630 --> 00:14:28,310

Was it two meals  
a day or did you

205

00:14:28,310 --> 00:14:30,800

have a lunch also or  
some snack that you

206

00:14:30,800 --> 00:14:33,740

brought to the job site?

207

00:14:33,740 --> 00:14:37,880

I don't remember whether  
we had two or three meals.

208

00:14:37,880 --> 00:14:39,770

But we had good meals.

209

00:14:39,770 --> 00:14:43,745

Whenever we sat down to eat  
they give us enough food.

210

00:14:43,745 --> 00:14:47,900

As a matter of fact,  
we could have seconds.

211  
00:14:47,900 --> 00:14:51,920  
So food was not the  
problem over there.

212  
00:14:51,920 --> 00:14:53,300  
We weren't hungry.

213  
00:14:53,300 --> 00:14:55,460  
Do you recall how long  
you were in the camp

214  
00:14:55,460 --> 00:15:01,310  
before this event happened  
with this young man?

215  
00:15:01,310 --> 00:15:04,130  
I would say about a couple  
of weeks, about two weeks,

216  
00:15:04,130 --> 00:15:06,900  
because I remember after that  
I stayed another two weeks.

217  
00:15:06,900 --> 00:15:09,560  
But at the time I didn't  
know how long I was

218  
00:15:09,560 --> 00:15:11,330  
going to remain at this camp.

219  
00:15:11,330 --> 00:15:13,250  
It wasn't like you  
went to a court

220  
00:15:13,250 --> 00:15:16,175  
and they meted out the sentence.

221  
00:15:16,175 --> 00:15:18,950

222  
00:15:18,950 --> 00:15:23,030

We were sent into this  
camp and I thought,

223  
00:15:23,030 --> 00:15:24,440  
I'm going to be there forever--

224  
00:15:24,440 --> 00:15:29,160  
until not forever, but  
until the end of the war.

225  
00:15:29,160 --> 00:15:33,560  
So the days continued.

226  
00:15:33,560 --> 00:15:39,345  
After this boy disappeared, I  
continued to do the same thing.

227  
00:15:39,345 --> 00:15:48,500  
I worked, hoping that someday  
they're going to release me.

228  
00:15:48,500 --> 00:15:50,420  
I didn't get into any trouble.

229  
00:15:50,420 --> 00:15:54,540  
Throughout the time, a lot of  
people were beaten up terribly.

230  
00:15:54,540 --> 00:15:57,920  
But I usually obeyed the  
rules and I worked hard.

231  
00:15:57,920 --> 00:16:00,140  
And throughout the  
time I was slapped,

232  
00:16:00,140 --> 00:16:05,795  
I was beaten up one time.

233  
00:16:05,795 --> 00:16:08,600

234

00:16:08,600 --> 00:16:14,060

One of the kapos, for some  
reason beat me up a little.

235

00:16:14,060 --> 00:16:16,520

Not terribly.

236

00:16:16,520 --> 00:16:25,400

And then and one  
night I had a dream,

237

00:16:25,400 --> 00:16:29,480

and it's a remarkable,  
remarkable,

238

00:16:29,480 --> 00:16:32,000

a remarkable event occurred.

239

00:16:32,000 --> 00:16:38,300

I was dreaming that we were  
in Dubno and it was a party.

240

00:16:38,300 --> 00:16:44,360

And a lot of people were milling  
around in the carriageways

241

00:16:44,360 --> 00:16:50,780

with drinks, wine and  
cakes and cookies.

242

00:16:50,780 --> 00:16:56,270

And in came this old man  
whom I knew from Dubno.

243

00:16:56,270 --> 00:16:58,970

He was a prominent  
individual who

244

00:16:58,970 --> 00:17:01,760

was president of  
the great synagogue

245

00:17:01,760 --> 00:17:06,230

the last years before the war.

246

00:17:06,230 --> 00:17:09,619

His name would have been Zion.

247

00:17:09,619 --> 00:17:10,640

He had a long beard.

248

00:17:10,640 --> 00:17:14,300

He was a pious man.

249

00:17:14,300 --> 00:17:24,859

And later on the scene shifted  
to the premises of the SS camp

250

00:17:24,859 --> 00:17:30,680

that I was in and all the German  
officers joined the party.

251

00:17:30,680 --> 00:17:33,620

252

00:17:33,620 --> 00:17:38,150

and this old man, this  
Ben Zion, looked over

253

00:17:38,150 --> 00:17:45,110

to the chief officer  
who was an SS officer

254

00:17:45,110 --> 00:17:46,410

and began to talk to him.

255

00:17:46,410 --> 00:17:51,470

And he put his finger, he  
pointed his finger at me

256

00:17:51,470 --> 00:17:54,650

and he said, I want him.

257

00:17:54,650 --> 00:18:00,730

And they talked for

quite some time.

258

00:18:00,730 --> 00:18:06,180

And the officer responded,  
go ahead and take him.

259

00:18:06,180 --> 00:18:09,950

And at that point I woke up.

260

00:18:09,950 --> 00:18:11,960

I was drenched in sweat.

261

00:18:11,960 --> 00:18:14,220

I was wet completely wet.

262

00:18:14,220 --> 00:18:18,380

And I knew at the time when I  
woke up that morning they're

263

00:18:18,380 --> 00:18:20,930

going to release me.

264

00:18:20,930 --> 00:18:23,300

And I knew it absolutely.

265

00:18:23,300 --> 00:18:28,460

And as soon after  
that was we woke up

266

00:18:28,460 --> 00:18:32,540

there was the whistle to  
wake up, [SPEAKING GERMAN]..

267

00:18:32,540 --> 00:18:34,970

And we assembled every morning.

268

00:18:34,970 --> 00:18:37,520

After making the bed  
and having breakfast

269

00:18:37,520 --> 00:18:42,170

we assembled in front of

the office for roll call.

270

00:18:42,170 --> 00:18:44,150

And I knew they're  
going to call me.

271

00:18:44,150 --> 00:18:47,120

And they called two  
other boys, and then they

272

00:18:47,120 --> 00:18:50,720

called my name, Andre  
Trag, to be released.

273

00:18:50,720 --> 00:18:52,490

And that morning I was released.

274

00:18:52,490 --> 00:18:55,890

275

00:18:55,890 --> 00:18:56,910

Ben Zion.

276

00:18:56,910 --> 00:18:59,640

This is B-E-N Z-I-O-N?

277

00:18:59,640 --> 00:19:05,040

Z-I-O-N. Ben Zion.

278

00:19:05,040 --> 00:19:08,580

This is now the  
late spring of '43?

279

00:19:08,580 --> 00:19:14,520

Yeah, this would be the end of  
May, beginning of June of 1943.

280

00:19:14,520 --> 00:19:15,020

Yes.

281

00:19:15,020 --> 00:19:19,830

Do you have any idea



what the machinations

282

00:19:19,830 --> 00:19:24,750  
are behind the scenes that  
result in your being released?

283

00:19:24,750 --> 00:19:25,680  
No.

284

00:19:25,680 --> 00:19:26,580  
No idea whatsoever.

285

00:19:26,580 --> 00:19:27,390  
No idea.

286

00:19:27,390 --> 00:19:27,930  
No.

287

00:19:27,930 --> 00:19:31,530  
No, they didn't  
tell you anything.

288

00:19:31,530 --> 00:19:34,800  
They would order you to go  
one way or another, one place

289

00:19:34,800 --> 00:19:35,400  
to another.

290

00:19:35,400 --> 00:19:38,580  
They never told you any details.

291

00:19:38,580 --> 00:19:41,730  
But I was very, very pleased  
to be released from that.

292

00:19:41,730 --> 00:19:43,110  
It was a terrible place.

293

00:19:43,110 --> 00:19:49,110  
And I knew that if  
I would have to stay

294

00:19:49,110 --> 00:19:53,280  
in this place for the remainder  
of the war I might not survive.

295

00:19:53,280 --> 00:19:54,870  
It was very bad.

296

00:19:54,870 --> 00:19:57,985  
How many men were in the camp?

297

00:19:57,985 --> 00:19:58,860  
I don't know exactly.

298

00:19:58,860 --> 00:20:00,280  
But there were a lot of men.

299

00:20:00,280 --> 00:20:02,820  
It could have maybe 500.

300

00:20:02,820 --> 00:20:04,470  
And no women.

301

00:20:04,470 --> 00:20:05,190  
No women.

302

00:20:05,190 --> 00:20:05,690  
No.

303

00:20:05,690 --> 00:20:08,280

304

00:20:08,280 --> 00:20:13,860  
And when you're released,  
released means what?

305

00:20:13,860 --> 00:20:18,690  
Well, we went to  
registration again

306

00:20:18,690 --> 00:20:22,200

and the medical examination.

307

00:20:22,200 --> 00:20:24,870

Evidently that they  
conducted some experiment

308

00:20:24,870 --> 00:20:28,240

because they weighed us  
and they weighed us in.

309

00:20:28,240 --> 00:20:30,350

They put us on the  
scale when we came in

310

00:20:30,350 --> 00:20:33,630

and the scale when we went out.

311

00:20:33,630 --> 00:20:40,620

And we were put  
into a room, and we

312

00:20:40,620 --> 00:20:44,670

were three people, three boys  
who were released that day.

313

00:20:44,670 --> 00:20:49,140

And later on we were  
transported back to Coblenz.

314

00:20:49,140 --> 00:20:52,380

From Trier to Coblenz  
to a police station.

315

00:20:52,380 --> 00:20:55,590

And they took us in a  
room and told us to wait.

316

00:20:55,590 --> 00:20:58,260

And before long  
came in a man whom

317

00:20:58,260 --> 00:21:01,170

I knew from Hagen.

When I worked and Hagen

318

00:21:01,170 --> 00:21:04,830

I knew he was a minor official  
in this residential camp.

319

00:21:04,830 --> 00:21:08,340

And I was not happy to  
see him, although he

320

00:21:08,340 --> 00:21:09,690

was a decent individual.

321

00:21:09,690 --> 00:21:11,550

I didn't have any  
problems with him

322

00:21:11,550 --> 00:21:16,110

but I realized they're  
taking me back to Hagen.

323

00:21:16,110 --> 00:21:20,280

And going back to Hagen to the  
[SPEAKING FOREIGN LANGUAGE]

324

00:21:20,280 --> 00:21:27,540

meant that I would  
meet again this man who

325

00:21:27,540 --> 00:21:31,800

was my boss before leaving  
Hagen. His name was, I believe,

326

00:21:31,800 --> 00:21:33,840

Netzel.

327

00:21:33,840 --> 00:21:36,900

But I had little choice in that.

328

00:21:36,900 --> 00:21:39,090

And this man took me.

329

00:21:39,090 --> 00:21:42,840  
I signed all the papers and he  
took me to the train station

330  
00:21:42,840 --> 00:21:48,000  
and we went from  
Coblenz back to Hagen.

331  
00:21:48,000 --> 00:21:52,260  
I remember he was very  
tired, this German official,

332  
00:21:52,260 --> 00:21:56,830  
and I didn't have  
handcuffs or anything.

333  
00:21:56,830 --> 00:22:01,080  
So he told me, and he was afraid  
that I'm going to escape again,

334  
00:22:01,080 --> 00:22:04,370  
so I had to give  
him my word of honor

335  
00:22:04,370 --> 00:22:07,720  
and say, Andre, don't run away  
because I'll be in big trouble

336  
00:22:07,720 --> 00:22:08,220  
if I do.

337  
00:22:08,220 --> 00:22:09,960  
And I had the give  
him a word of honor

338  
00:22:09,960 --> 00:22:12,210  
that I'm not going to run away.

339  
00:22:12,210 --> 00:22:15,750  
Although I had some  
thoughts about escape,

340  
00:22:15,750 --> 00:22:17,422

running from the  
train, because sleep he

341  
00:22:17,422 --> 00:22:19,380  
was sleeping all the way  
from Coblenz to Hagen.

342  
00:22:19,380 --> 00:22:22,060  
But i didn't want to  
cause any trouble.

343  
00:22:22,060 --> 00:22:30,330  
And so we came back to Hagen.  
And they didn't need me anymore

344  
00:22:30,330 --> 00:22:34,050  
as an interpreter, so they gave  
me a job working in a factory.

345  
00:22:34,050 --> 00:22:40,270  
And worked the night shift  
and I remained in Hagen

346  
00:22:40,270 --> 00:22:43,290  
for a few days.

347  
00:22:43,290 --> 00:22:48,060  
And I noticed when  
I came to have

348  
00:22:48,060 --> 00:22:49,830  
them to send me back  
to the same room

349  
00:22:49,830 --> 00:22:52,230  
that I used to stay before.

350  
00:22:52,230 --> 00:22:54,420  
And I noticed the  
relation with the boys,

351  
00:22:54,420 --> 00:22:57,570  
there were 16 of us

in the room, was cool.

352

00:22:57,570 --> 00:23:02,140

I mean, before we had  
a warm, close relation.

353

00:23:02,140 --> 00:23:03,820

We would talk to each other.

354

00:23:03,820 --> 00:23:08,730

And this time was sort of cool.

355

00:23:08,730 --> 00:23:16,410

and one boy said,  
this man came here,

356

00:23:16,410 --> 00:23:19,140

this Ukrainian  
official came here

357

00:23:19,140 --> 00:23:21,450

from the Ukrainian  
National Committee,

358

00:23:21,450 --> 00:23:24,900

and he was looking for you  
and asked, where is that Jew?

359

00:23:24,900 --> 00:23:28,770

Where's the Trag, Andre Trag?

360

00:23:28,770 --> 00:23:34,710

See what happened when I was  
in Hagen the Ukrainians who

361

00:23:34,710 --> 00:23:43,770

came from Western Ukraine  
had a special relation

362

00:23:43,770 --> 00:23:45,750

with the German government.

363

00:23:45,750 --> 00:23:49,230

There was a Ukrainian  
National Committee

364

00:23:49,230 --> 00:23:55,890

who had offices throughout  
large German cities

365

00:23:55,890 --> 00:24:01,390

to protect the rights  
of the Ukrainians

366

00:24:01,390 --> 00:24:05,510

from the Western  
part of Ukraine.

367

00:24:05,510 --> 00:24:10,130

And the Ukrainian who  
came from that part

368

00:24:10,130 --> 00:24:11,810

had special privileges,  
were getting

369

00:24:11,810 --> 00:24:13,730

better rations and all that.

370

00:24:13,730 --> 00:24:17,780

For some silly reason,  
I sent a letter

371

00:24:17,780 --> 00:24:22,460

because my people, the people  
that were from Russian Ukraine,

372

00:24:22,460 --> 00:24:26,510

didn't receive all  
the privileges.

373

00:24:26,510 --> 00:24:28,790

I had a silly notion  
to send a letter

374



00:24:28,790 --> 00:24:31,310  
to the Ukrainian  
National Committee

375  
00:24:31,310 --> 00:24:34,370  
in Essen to complain  
about it and told

376  
00:24:34,370 --> 00:24:36,140  
them to straighten this out.

377  
00:24:36,140 --> 00:24:38,510  
So for some reason  
my letter didn't

378  
00:24:38,510 --> 00:24:43,040  
sound like a letter written  
by Ukrainian peasant,

379  
00:24:43,040 --> 00:24:47,390  
so they suspected  
me of being Jewish.

380  
00:24:47,390 --> 00:24:50,510  
On whose behalf are  
you writing the letter?

381  
00:24:50,510 --> 00:24:53,330  
On behalf of all the  
Western Ukrainians

382  
00:24:53,330 --> 00:25:00,160  
working for this factory  
when I lived in Hagen.

383  
00:25:00,160 --> 00:25:01,160  
What was motivating you?

384  
00:25:01,160 --> 00:25:03,500  
You call it a silly  
reason, but what

385  
00:25:03,500 --> 00:25:05,090

was your rationale at the time?

386

00:25:05,090 --> 00:25:07,940

Why would you advocate  
for these people?

387

00:25:07,940 --> 00:25:11,270

Well, we live together  
and we work together

388

00:25:11,270 --> 00:25:18,590

and I was Russian Ukrainian too.

389

00:25:18,590 --> 00:25:24,635

And so I felt that these people  
should get the privileges

390

00:25:24,635 --> 00:25:25,760

that they were entitled to.

391

00:25:25,760 --> 00:25:27,980

Like I said, it  
was a silly notion.

392

00:25:27,980 --> 00:25:28,880

I was young and--

393

00:25:28,880 --> 00:25:32,990

394

00:25:32,990 --> 00:25:36,560

So what happened, by the time  
this man from the National

395

00:25:36,560 --> 00:25:40,280

Committee came to  
Hagen to investigate,

396

00:25:40,280 --> 00:25:41,330

I wasn't there anymore.

397

00:25:41,330 --> 00:25:46,430

Because at that time I was  
working in this lead foundry

398  
00:25:46,430 --> 00:25:50,720  
away from Hagen, somehow  
they didn't pursue it.

399  
00:25:50,720 --> 00:25:53,700  
They weren't sure, but  
since I wasn't there

400  
00:25:53,700 --> 00:25:55,180  
they dropped the notion.

401  
00:25:55,180 --> 00:26:00,350  
But just the fact that they  
investigated and suspected

402  
00:26:00,350 --> 00:26:03,690  
me of being Jewish,  
it bothered me.

403  
00:26:03,690 --> 00:26:07,670  
In retrospect, what might  
you think would tip them off

404  
00:26:07,670 --> 00:26:10,250  
that this letter was  
written by a Jewish person

405  
00:26:10,250 --> 00:26:13,250  
if there are syntax and grammar?

406  
00:26:13,250 --> 00:26:20,960  
Or if it only a Jewish person  
would complain in this way?

407  
00:26:20,960 --> 00:26:22,280  
No, the form of the letter.

408  
00:26:22,280 --> 00:26:25,460  
Because I used to see the  
letters written by my friends

409

00:26:25,460 --> 00:26:31,220  
and they would start with  
Christ and the letter

410

00:26:31,220 --> 00:26:37,430  
would always begin with some  
reference and some phrase

411

00:26:37,430 --> 00:26:41,240  
about Christ being not  
good to you or helping you

412

00:26:41,240 --> 00:26:42,380  
or something like that.

413

00:26:42,380 --> 00:26:47,310  
Of course, I didn't  
enter this in the letter.

414

00:26:47,310 --> 00:26:51,920  
Was there mention of writing  
a letter or a document

415

00:26:51,920 --> 00:26:54,500  
that you didn't use?

416

00:26:54,500 --> 00:26:56,720  
Yeah, you didn't  
use those phrases

417

00:26:56,720 --> 00:27:02,540  
that other Ukrainian  
people would use.

418

00:27:02,540 --> 00:27:10,250  
It was a letter written in  
the proper Ukrainian language

419

00:27:10,250 --> 00:27:12,980  
and grammatically,  
which didn't help either

420

00:27:12,980 --> 00:27:19,770

because most of the boys  
didn't write the language

421

00:27:19,770 --> 00:27:21,890

as grammatical as I did.

422

00:27:21,890 --> 00:27:26,240

And if I may, let me take  
you back a little bit

423

00:27:26,240 --> 00:27:28,850

and then return  
to this point back

424

00:27:28,850 --> 00:27:32,510

in Hagen. I'd like to  
take you back to Trier

425

00:27:32,510 --> 00:27:35,270

and have you again  
to describe if you

426

00:27:35,270 --> 00:27:40,700

will the daily ritual  
of a nude inspection.

427

00:27:40,700 --> 00:27:43,760

Did they have a  
doctor in the camp?

428

00:27:43,760 --> 00:27:47,240

Yes, they did have a doctor,  
more than one doctor,

429

00:27:47,240 --> 00:27:47,970

in the camp.

430

00:27:47,970 --> 00:27:52,550

And is it a doctor sitting  
behind the table, perhaps?

431

00:27:52,550 --> 00:27:56,030  
What do you recall about  
the specifics of the setup?

432  
00:27:56,030 --> 00:27:58,730  
When we last spoke,  
you mentioned you'd

433  
00:27:58,730 --> 00:28:01,260  
go through like a turnstile.

434  
00:28:01,260 --> 00:28:01,760  
Yes.

435  
00:28:01,760 --> 00:28:04,940  
Is there In fact a turnstile  
that each one goes through?

436  
00:28:04,940 --> 00:28:07,520  
Yes, there was.

437  
00:28:07,520 --> 00:28:09,350  
Not exactly a  
turnstile with a wheel

438  
00:28:09,350 --> 00:28:13,220  
turning, but it was  
a narrow passage

439  
00:28:13,220 --> 00:28:15,890  
that yet had to go through.

440  
00:28:15,890 --> 00:28:17,060  
There was no doctor, no.

441  
00:28:17,060 --> 00:28:18,410  
There was a Kapo.

442  
00:28:18,410 --> 00:28:21,635  
One of the kapos  
was sitting there.

443

00:28:21,635 --> 00:28:24,350

Does he have a pen and  
paper is he writing down?

444

00:28:24,350 --> 00:28:26,600

Does he know your  
identification?

445

00:28:26,600 --> 00:28:28,050

Nothing.

446

00:28:28,050 --> 00:28:33,920

Is he looking at you or is he  
distracted, doing other things?

447

00:28:33,920 --> 00:28:38,040

Well, it was an unpleasant job  
I imagine, and this young man,

448

00:28:38,040 --> 00:28:40,010

this kapo was sitting  
there with the pencil

449

00:28:40,010 --> 00:28:45,470

and sort of picking up a  
penis and he didn't ask names.

450

00:28:45,470 --> 00:28:47,870

He actually touches  
you with a pen.

451

00:28:47,870 --> 00:28:50,390

452

00:28:50,390 --> 00:28:52,420

He had a pencil or  
something like that.

453

00:28:52,420 --> 00:28:57,020

Do you remember this with  
this much specificity

454

00:28:57,020 --> 00:28:59,510

being touched with a pencil?

455

00:28:59,510 --> 00:29:01,730

Yes.

456

00:29:01,730 --> 00:29:03,370

Daily.

457

00:29:03,370 --> 00:29:04,300

All this time.

458

00:29:04,300 --> 00:29:09,460

And there's no explanation you  
have in your own mind for how

459

00:29:09,460 --> 00:29:12,400

this person could  
overlook the fact that you

460

00:29:12,400 --> 00:29:14,050

have circumcision.

461

00:29:14,050 --> 00:29:16,660

Well, I believe what  
happened he was sitting there

462

00:29:16,660 --> 00:29:22,325

daily and looking at  
these hundreds of men

463

00:29:22,325 --> 00:29:23,200

coming through there.

464

00:29:23,200 --> 00:29:26,020

It was an unpleasant job and  
I imagine they didn't even

465

00:29:26,020 --> 00:29:26,892

think about it.

466

00:29:26,892 --> 00:29:28,600

And it never occurred



to them there would

467

00:29:28,600 --> 00:29:32,820  
be a Jewish boy in these camps.

468

00:29:32,820 --> 00:29:35,110  
So he never gave it thought.

469

00:29:35,110 --> 00:29:39,490  
That's my own explanation how  
he couldn't see because there's

470

00:29:39,490 --> 00:29:40,360  
a big difference.

471

00:29:40,360 --> 00:29:44,440  
I could tell the  
difference with looking

472

00:29:44,440 --> 00:29:47,410  
at the penis of the other boys.

473

00:29:47,410 --> 00:29:52,780  
And do you recall  
thinking about some way

474

00:29:52,780 --> 00:29:59,080  
of hiding the fact  
of the circumcision,

475

00:29:59,080 --> 00:30:01,630  
or walking in a way that  
you wouldn't see you,

476

00:30:01,630 --> 00:30:02,920  
or trying to--

477

00:30:02,920 --> 00:30:06,640  
Or you really have no choice  
and make no effort to--

478

00:30:06,640 --> 00:30:07,630

There was no choice.

479

00:30:07,630 --> 00:30:10,180

No, I had to go through and  
you're walking very fast.

480

00:30:10,180 --> 00:30:11,350

You kept moving.

481

00:30:11,350 --> 00:30:17,170

The line was kept moving because  
you inspect this many people

482

00:30:17,170 --> 00:30:18,800

they had to do it quickly.

483

00:30:18,800 --> 00:30:23,950

So I doubt this boy ever  
even paid attention.

484

00:30:23,950 --> 00:30:29,710

I'd also like to ask  
you, this very profoundly

485

00:30:29,710 --> 00:30:33,490

rich and meaningful  
dream that you had,

486

00:30:33,490 --> 00:30:36,250

were you in the habit  
of noticing your dreams?

487

00:30:36,250 --> 00:30:39,140

Were dreams of some  
importance to you?

488

00:30:39,140 --> 00:30:42,340

Do you have a pattern of  
dreams throughout this period

489

00:30:42,340 --> 00:30:44,680

that you might have  
some recollection of,

490

00:30:44,680 --> 00:30:47,620

or this particular  
was just so striking?

491

00:30:47,620 --> 00:30:54,850

No, I didn't remember any dreams  
of as particular and poignant

492

00:30:54,850 --> 00:30:58,840

as this dream.

493

00:30:58,840 --> 00:31:01,460

Yeah, being a young  
man I'm sure I dreamt.

494

00:31:01,460 --> 00:31:04,510

I don't remember any of  
the dreams that I had.

495

00:31:04,510 --> 00:31:18,820

But this dream was so  
timely and how can I say?

496

00:31:18,820 --> 00:31:21,730

It was like a mission.

497

00:31:21,730 --> 00:31:29,770

Like this man was on a  
mission from some higher force

498

00:31:29,770 --> 00:31:33,010

to come and take  
me out of there.

499

00:31:33,010 --> 00:31:37,200

For a long time whenever I was  
telling people about this dream

500

00:31:37,200 --> 00:31:41,930

I was getting  
shivers in my skin.

501

00:31:41,930 --> 00:31:48,610

Such a dream, I think, for  
a young boy in such very

502

00:31:48,610 --> 00:31:56,980

dangerous circumstances could  
convey to you a sense that you

503

00:31:56,980 --> 00:32:01,540

are under some protection, that  
your community, your family,

504

00:32:01,540 --> 00:32:06,430

or your religion perhaps  
are looking out for you.

505

00:32:06,430 --> 00:32:08,620

As a matter of fact,  
at some point in time

506

00:32:08,620 --> 00:32:11,650

I began to think that  
I'm a special case.

507

00:32:11,650 --> 00:32:15,310

And also about that  
time and prior to that

508

00:32:15,310 --> 00:32:21,190

I got into a habit of asking  
God before going to sleep,

509

00:32:21,190 --> 00:32:25,750

before retiring, I would ask  
God to let me live one more day.

510

00:32:25,750 --> 00:32:29,290

And also when I left the  
ghetto I was not religious,

511

00:32:29,290 --> 00:32:35,400

but when I came to Germany  
my views changed somewhat.

512  
00:32:35,400 --> 00:32:39,730  
Then especially after going  
through all these trials

513  
00:32:39,730 --> 00:32:44,210  
and tribulations and all  
these miracles, you're right,

514  
00:32:44,210 --> 00:32:46,780  
I began to think that  
maybe I'm a special case.

515  
00:32:46,780 --> 00:32:48,910  
And then I thought, why me?

516  
00:32:48,910 --> 00:32:52,540  
Why all my friends  
were killed, my parents

517  
00:32:52,540 --> 00:32:56,740  
were killed, my whole family  
was killed, why pick on me?

518  
00:32:56,740 --> 00:33:01,060  
But you right at some point  
in time, I didn't know why.

519  
00:33:01,060 --> 00:33:07,200  
First this boy disappearing,  
and a few weeks later,

520  
00:33:07,200 --> 00:33:08,230  
I had this dream.

521  
00:33:08,230 --> 00:33:13,420  
And it sort of gave me  
some things to think about.

522  
00:33:13,420 --> 00:33:19,480  
When you would invoke God in the  
evening to protect you for one

523

00:33:19,480 --> 00:33:22,290

more day, would you do so--